1 **What is claimed is:**

2 1.   A method for using a performance interface to retrieve performance data from

3 SAN devices in a storage area network (SAN), the method comprising:

4   instructing a device plug-in (DPI) to retrieve performance metrics data from a

5 corresponding SAN device;

6   determining a minimum polling interval for polling the SAN device for the

7 performance metrics data;

8   determining a maximum polling interval for polling the SAN device for the

9 performance metrics data; and

10   collecting the performance metrics data from the DPI using the performance

11 interface.

12 2.   The method of claim 1, further comprising providing the DPI with an address of

13 the SAN device.

14 3.   The method of claim 1, further comprising instructing the DPI to perform a task to

15 retrieve the performance metrics data.

16 4.   The method of claim 3, wherein the task includes reading log files maintained by

17 the corresponding SAN device.

18 5.   The method of claim 3, wherein the task includes navigating structure of internal

19 counters maintained by the corresponding SAN device.

20 6.   The method of claim 3, wherein the task includes implementing specific

21 application programming interface (API) calls into management software for the

22 corresponding SAN device.

23 7.   The method of claim 1, wherein the instructing step includes instructing the DPI

24 to retrieve performance metrics data from a corresponding storage array.

25 8.   A system for using a performance interface to retrieve performance data from

26 SAN devices in a storage area network (SAN), comprising:

27   a plurality of device plug-ins (DPIs), each DPI communicates with a SAN device

28 to retrieve performance metrics data from the SAN device, each DPI comprises a

29 performance interface, the performance interface comprises:

30   a function indicator instructing the DPI to retrieve performance metrics

31   data from the corresponding SAN device;

32   a minimum polling indicator determining a minimum polling interval for

33   polling the corresponding SAN device for the performance metrics data; and

1   a maximum polling indicator determining a maximum polling interval for

2   polling the corresponding SAN device for the performance metrics data; and

3   a performance application that collects the performance metric data from the

4 plurality of DPIs using the performance interface.

5 9.   The system of claim 8, wherein the performance interface further comprises an

6 address indicator that provides the DPI with an address of the SAN device.

7 10.   The system of claim 8, wherein the DPIs are Java code.

8 11.   The system of claim 8, further comprising a plurality of abstract data sources,

9 each abstract data source corresponding to a SAN device, each abstract data source

10 receiving from and transmitting data to the performance interface.

11 12.   The system of claim 11, wherein the abstract data sources are Java code.

12 13.   The system of claim 8, wherein the performance application polls the SAN at

13 particular intervals between the minimum polling interval and the maximum polling

14 interval.

15 14.   The system of claim 8, wherein the DPIs perform a task to retrieve the

16 performance metrics data.

17 15.   The system of claim 14, wherein the task includes reading log files maintained by

18 the corresponding SAN device.

19 16.   The system of claim 14, wherein the task includes navigating structure of internal

20 counters maintained by the corresponding SAN device.

21 17.   The system of claim 14, wherein the task includes implementing specific

22 application programming interface (API) calls into management software for the

23 corresponding SAN device.

24 18.   A computer readable medium providing instructions for using a performance

25 interface to retrieve performance data from SAN devices in a storage area network

26 (SAN), the instructions comprising:

27   instructing a device plug-in (DPI) to retrieve performance metrics data from a

28 corresponding SAN device;

29   determining a minimum polling interval for polling the SAN device for the

30 performance metrics data;

31   determining a maximum polling interval for polling the SAN device for the

32 performance metrics data; and

33   collecting the performance metrics data from the DPI using the performance

34 interface.

1   19.   The computer readable medium of claim 18, further comprising instructions for

2   providing the DPI with an address of the SAN device.

3   20.   The computer readable medium of claim 18, further comprising instructions for

4   instructing the DPI to perform a task to retrieve the performance metrics data.